NUMB. C.

The GUARDIAN.

Hoc vos præcipuè, niveæ, decet. hoc ubi vidi,
Oſcula *ferre humero, quà patet, uſque libet.* Ovid.

Monday, July 6. 1713.

THERE is a certain Female Ornament by ſome called a Tucker, and by others the Neck-piece, being a ſlip of fine Linnen or Muſlin that uſed to run in a ſmall kind of ruffle round the uppermoſt Verge of the Womens Stays, and by that means covered a great part of the Shoulders and Boſom. Having thus given a Definition, or rather Deſcription of the Tucker, I muſt take Notice, that our Ladies have of late thrown aſide this Fig-Leaf, and expoſed in its Primitive Nakedneſs that gentle Swelling of the Breaſt which it was uſed to conceal. What their Deſign by it is they themſelves beſt know.

I obſerved this as I was ſitting the other Day by a famous She-Viſitant at my Lady *Lizard*'s, when accidentally as I was looking upon her Face, letting my Sight fall into her Boſom, I was ſurprized with Beauties which I never before diſcovered, and do not know where my Eye wou'd have run, if I had not immediately checked it. The Lady herſelf could not forbear bluſhing when ſhe obſerved by my Looks, that ſhe had made her Neck too beautiful and glaring an Object, even for a Man of my Character and Gravity. I could ſcarce forbear making uſe of my Hand to cover ſo unſeemly a Sight.

If we Survey the Pictures of our Great Grandmothers in Queen *Elizabeth*'s Time, we ſee them cloathed down to the very Wriſts, and up to the very Chin. The Hands and Face were the only Samples they gave of their beautiful Perſons. The following Age of Females made larger Diſcoveries of their Complection. They firſt of all tucked up their Garments to the Elbow, and notwithſtanding the Tenderneſs of the Sex, were Content for the Information of Mankind, to expoſe their Arms to the Coldneſs of the Air, and Injuries of the Weather. This Artifice hath ſucceeded to their Wiſhes, and betrayed many to their Arms, who might have eſcaped them had they been ſtill concealed.

About the ſame time the Ladies conſidering that the Neck was a very Modeſt Part in a Human Body, they freed it from thoſe Yoaks, I mean thoſe monſtrous Linnen Ruffs, in which the Simplicity of their Grandmothers had encloſed it. In proportion as the Age refined, the Dreſs ſtill ſunk lower, ſo that when we now ſay a Woman has a handſom Neck, we reckon it into many of the adjacent Parts. The diſuſe of the Tucker has ſtill enlarged it, inſomuch that the Neck of a fine Woman at preſent takes in almoſt half the Body.

Since the Female Neck thus grows upon us, and the Ladies ſeem diſpoſed to diſcover themſelves to us more and more, I would fain have them tell us once for all how far they intend to go, and whether they have yet determined among themſelves where to make a Stop.

For my own Part, their Necks, as they call them, are no more than *Buſts* of Alablaſter in my Eye. I can look upon

The yielding Marble of a ſnowy Breaſt

with

(Price Two Pence.)

with as much Coldneſs as this Line of *Mr. Waller* repreſents in the Object it ſelf. But my fair Readers ought to conſider, that all their Beholders are not *Neſtors*. Every Man is not ſufficiently qualified with Age and Philoſophy to be an indifferent Spectator of ſuch Allurements. The Eyes of young Men are curious and penetrating, their Imaginations of a roving Nature, and their Paſſions under no Diſcipline or Reſtraint. I am in Pain for a Woman of Rank when I ſee her thus expoſing her ſelf to the Regards of every impudent ſtaring Fellow. How can ſhe expect that her Quality can defend her when ſhe gives ſuch Provocation? I could not but obſerve laſt Winter, that upon the diſuſe of the Neck-peice (the Ladies will pardon me if it is not the faſhionable Term of Art) the whole Tribe of Oglers gave their Eyes a new Determination, and ſtared the Fair Sex in the Neck rather than in the Face. To prevent theſe ſawcy familiar Glances, I would entreat my gentle Readers to ſow on their Tuckers again, to retrieve the Modeſty of their Characters, and not to imitate the Nakedneſs, but the innocence of their Mother *Eve*.

What moſt troubles and indeed ſurprizes me in this Particular, I have obſerved that the Leaders in this Faſhion were moſt of them married Women. What their Deſign can be in making themſelves bare I cannot poſſibly imagine. No Body expoſes Wares that are appropriated. When the Bird is taken the Snare ought to be removed. It was a remarkable Circumſtance in the Inſtitution of the ſevere *Lycurgus*. As that great Law-giver knew that the Wealth and Strength of a Republick conſiſted in the Multitude of Citizens, he did all he could to encourage Marriage: In order to it he preſcribed a certain looſe Dreſs for the *Spartan* Maids, in which there were ſeveral Artificial Rents and Openings, that upon their putting themſelves in Motion diſcovered ſeveral Limbs of the Body to the Beholders. Such were the Baits and Temptations made uſe of, by that wiſe Law-giver, to incline the young Men of his Age to Marriage. But when the Maid was once ſped ſhe was not ſuffered to tantaliſe the Male Part of the Commonwealth. Her Garments were cloſed up, and ſtitched together with the greateſt Care imaginable. The Shape of her Limbs and Complexion of her Body had gained their Ends, and were ever after to be concealed from the Notice of the Publick.

I ſhall conclude this Diſcourſe of the Tucker with a Moral which I have taught upon all Occaſions, and ſhall ſtill continue to inculcate into my Female Readers; namely, that nothing beſtows ſo much Beauty on a Woman as Modeſty. This is a Maxim laid down by *Ovid* himſelf, the greateſt Maſter in the Art of Love. He obſerves upon it, that *Venus* pleaſes moſt when ſhe appears (*ſemi-reducta*) in a Figure withdrawing her ſelf from the Eye of the Beholder. It is very probable he had in his Thoughts the Statue which we ſee in the *Venus de Medicis*, where ſhe is repreſented in ſuch a ſhy retiring Poſture, and covers her Boſom with one of her Hands. In ſhort, Modeſty gives the Maid greater Beauty then even the bloom of Youth, it beſtows on the Wife the Dignity of a Matron, and reinſtates the Widow in her Virginity.

This Paper is to be had of Mr. Yemes *under the* Thatch'd-houſe *Tavern in St.* James's-ſtreet; *Mrs.* Bond *at* Charing-croſs; *Mrs.* Bolter *and Mrs.* Dodd *near the* Temple-gate; *and Mr.* Round *in* Exchange-Ally.

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